



FOR THE LOVE OF PETS

Contemporary Architecture
and Design for Animals



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A Heartfelt Connection

What would a household be without a pet? Most of us animal lovers and pet pawrents would rather not think about such an idea—the absence of little paws roaming the hallway with the accompanying clicketty-clicketting of pet nails, the chirp of a greeting on your return from work, or the exuberant tail-wagging excitement that only a dog can convey when their human is back with them—because life would be empty and glum without such things!

Around the world, and in varied residential spaces, a variety of non-human critters proudly hold the title “loved pet,” from furry and feathered, to clawed and crawly, to finned and scaly; appearance means little and matters not, as long as the heart connection is strong.

And it is no news, given the results of many studies conducted, that a pet and its unconditional love and acceptance has the power to soften hearts, reduce stress, and relax a furrowed brow. Oh, and let’s not forget a cat’s purring. That’s a whole other level of “therapy.” If you make room in your heart for a pet, it’s going to be there FURrrrever, because this is no two-day commitment; it’s for the rest of pooch’s and kitty’s life.

For the love of pets, we definitely take pleasure in lavishing attention on our family members, spending huge and ever-increasing amounts of time and finances on their care, comfort, health, and happiness; not to mention the many toys, beds, and engagement tools. It also helps that there is a vast array of sophisticated pet products available in the marketplace today that reflects immense thought and care that has gone into their design. The projects in this book reveal the talents of designers from across the globe, including South Korea, Spain, France, Japan, The Netherlands, Sweden, and more, who deliver creations that are both stylish and just as equally functional and comfortable.

Interior and furniture designer, and founder of concept development company Designfolder, Eleonor Moschewitz, comments on the growing trend for affordable and stylish designs in pet furniture: “People are getting more aware of their homes; in Scandinavia, every home in urban areas looks like something out of a magazine. Interior design is growing and ordinary people are starting to buy into it. There’s a lot of affordable designs on the market ... I think that has, and will, influence the pet product design industry.”

“Design should be as simple as possible. But the hard part is to make it unique while keeping it simple. How can you make a product unique without adding something?” opines Onurhan Demir, industrial designer and creator of the Weelywally brand of pet furniture, revealing the presence of creativity and design exhibited in a vast amount of pet furniture today, resulting in desirable clean lines and styles that do not clash with the modern decor.

“The designed cat goods are usually not interesting for the cat ... so first I had to understand what a cat is ... Second, I had a brief to design a piece that could fit into a designer home and did absolutely not look like something that has been seen before,” Moschewitz explains further.

The influence of the internet, the availability of more advanced, sophisticated materials, and the dedication of the design to the pet who would be using the furniture has certainly trained a more tasteful eye and discerning selection process among pet guardians when purchasing products for their pets; more of us care about the appearance of our homes and strive to find pieces that are unique and add personality and style, as well as speak volumes about our furry apple of our eye.



More experienced designers are turning to designing pet furniture and the results include some stylish projects in the book’s line-up, such as The Cat Flat, Three Poles Cat Tower, and Neko Modern Cat Tree, which can be moved from room to room, as required, or, like the Geometric Climber-6 Gratings (cat tree), even serve a dual purpose as a cat play area and a bookcase. Whatever your taste, budget, or color scheme, there are varied selections of products to bring pleasure to your pet (MYZOO Busycat shelves) and inject vibrant color (Kitty Kasas Collection), or understated elegance to your home. A stylish occasional table (Kikko table) that includes a bed for kitty also functions as a useful piece of furniture, allowing both human and puss to spend more time together. Many of the designs feature a playful sense of humor too, such as the Niku Rug fashioned to resemble a steak, or the quirky Fetch House, adorned with tennis balls, perfect for a ball-obsessed puppy!

Fun and frolicking aside, there is no point to a pretty-looking pet palace if it is uncomfortable for your pet to be in it. And it is reassuring to know that these days, a lot of thought is also given to the emotion, comfort, and security of the pet when designing items specific to them. Some designers even seek out trained pet psychologists who offer insights into a pet’s natural characteristics and behavior patterns, so that the pet furniture design can support these traits for maximum benefit to the pet. Knowing that a product has been designed by people who are pet/animal people themselves and has been tested by actual pets themselves is great news to a pet guardian because the value the item imparts is heightened.

“We conducted solid, very important research. We spoke with the best cat psychologist in Sweden, Susanne Hellman Holmström. In collaboration with her, we decided which features had to be taken into account so that the cabinet was created with the cats’ well-being in mind all the time,” reveals Viktoria Löwkrantz of PR and advertising company PostSthlm on The Cat Flat.

“We want the cabinet to add value to both the cat and the human. While it is attractive to look at, it at the same time fulfills cats’ needs, such as hiding, scratching, spying, playing, and sleeping, without compromising design,” she elaborates.

It is hardly surprising to find that a number of products, including Room Collection by A Cat Thing, or Juggernaut by Catastrophic Creations, are designed by animal lovers, who put their hours of observation to a constructive purpose, creating an environment that is both safe for the pet and inspires play, resulting in a contented and fulfilled animal.

“The design [of pet furniture] currently and down the road will be more from the pet’s perspective, for their health and happiness; people will start paying more attention to them and what they need. People less and less are seeing their cats and dogs as ‘pets,’ but more like a friend and family member; this is crucially important because it would mean that people truly care for them,” share husband-and-wife pet furniture designers A Cat Thing.

“Our cat, Lily, was very traumatized when we adopted her and her brother; they had to live with many other cats in the rescue center and then travel far away to our home when she was adopted. She refused to eat and drink for three days. When we were lost in panic, our friend who has two cats advised us to find her a cardboard box. We did it and she hid inside right away. Around an hour later, she emerged fresh! And started eating! That’s the moment we started collecting cardboard boxes. We didn’t think about making any product, we just wanted her to feel safe and happy.”





"We started playing with boxes and made little buildings. We are both architects and so we have the passion for turning everything into architecture; gradually, we developed a module concept to make the whole structure neat and easy to assemble ... It has to be easy and fun, and safe ... another challenge is to make it look nice. As architects, we like to keep things stylish and minimal to make it a delightful object within every space ... it's a constant test-and-error and an extremely time-consuming process; we made models for Chacha and Lily to try and they will show us what they like and don't like ... They are the bosses!" says A Cat Thing.

For many designers, it was at such similar moments when the inspiration struck to design pieces after their own heart and own experiences as pet guardians. Reveals Demir, "I was locked at home for two months [due to the pandemic]. I aimed to create a unique collection that nobody would expect from something like pet furniture. I sold my car to finance this project."

Sustainability and safety also seem to be the paths many designers are taking, and will take, heading into the future, with material selection for pet products: "Natural woods and 100 percent cotton fabrics can keep our friends away from chemicals ... There are also no sharp edges and corners in the designs to protect their eyes and faces," Demir continues.

"Sustainability thinking is a must! It has to be smart and safe too," says A Cat Thing.

It is clear that having love for the subject and a passion for what one does makes all the difference in striving for ultimate solutions in pet furniture that blend design and function. And this passion is demonstrated in the many dynamic projects that you will journey with in the pages ahead, browsing through stylish accents, creative concepts, and practical considerations that define current-day's pet furniture. But it doesn't stop there.

In these modern times, pet-tifying the home extends beyond simple pet products to include home architecture and design as well, and many creative solutions are employed to tailor the home for a pet's comfort, enjoyment, and engagement: such as a carpet wall to scurry up (Casa de Gatos), or an overhead bridge for active cats to keep occupied with (sHome), a raised perch so lovable canines can be eye-level with their humans (360 Villa), or portholes for shy felines to retreat into (House for Booklovers and Cats).

It is clear that there is no shortage of ingenious options. In some of the homes featured, cats are living it up and enjoying the many special home solutions that have been tailored just for them. Ranging from joinery work to create climbing areas, to catwalk rafter beams, to cat-path ledges, to carpet-covered walls for climbing, to sisal-covered columns as scratching posts, the creative explorations embarked on to design or renovate a home specifically for cats are wide and varied. Dogs get their day too, with a selection of works that honor the household's canine, with specially designed and built dog houses that form part of the architecture and decor, like in projects Sheridan Residence, Yololand, and Withrow Laneway House. And just like in pet furniture, these architecture and design modifications in both cat and canine households dig deep to consider a range of conditions to not only design dedicated spaces that match pooch's and kitty's personality and level of comfort, but also introduce playfulness into the aesthetics of the home.

Architect firm Studio North elaborates: "When considering our little fluffs during the design process, we always look for opportunities in the nooks and crannies. Normally, when designing a home, we only think about the scale of the human, so it takes a bit of a shift in thinking. We like to think of our pet as a client and understand what's important to them. I'm sure that everyone that is reading this book would

agree that our pets are beloved family members and they should have a space to call their own. Just like humans, dogs and cats have personalities of their own. Some are claustrophobic and don't like to feel enclosed, while others like to climb and have a high perch; others insist on sleeping at the foot of the bed. All of these are important things to consider when designing for our furry friends. We know that a dog wants to be somewhere that they can watch everything that's going on in the house since they consider themselves as the 'protector of the pack.' They also want to have a space that is cozy, secure, and close to their family. Quite often, depending on the size of our pet we find places in millwork, under desks, carving out a stud space, built into a bed frame, etc."

Commenting on the project Withrow Laneway House, they had this to say, "We knew that the dog house was going to be for a small Pomeranian named Spencer, so the scale of the nook was already determined. Spencer likes a cozy nook to sleep in and is a dedicated guard dog. We wanted to find a very central location in the house and so incorporated it into the millwork feature wall. The neat aspect of the dog house is that it's built into the cabinet on the other side of the wall in the bedroom, so when the cabinet door is open, it also serves as a passage into the bedroom. This way Spencer can be close to his family both during sleep at night and during the activities of the day ... It is always a fun design challenge, since pets come in all shapes and sizes, and personalities. They make for an exciting client to design for! It allows us to be really playful with making the most out of space."

When it comes to our pets, "creature comforts" is something of an understatement and, truthfully, just the start of it. There is almost no task or acquisition that is "over the top" when ensuring a nurturing and fulfilling environment for our special nuzzle buds. With many home floor plans shrinking in size, imaginative pet furniture designs present function, with a welcome heaping of aesthetic and style, as Löwkrantz highlights.

"Every cat has thirteen 'necessity' needs that need to be fulfilled in order for a cat to feel good and be satisfied in their home ... cats are very popular pets and people tend to forget that they have a lot of wild instincts carried through in their DNA. One thing that every cat owner should take into consideration is to offer the cat possibilities to spy, hunt, and give them a place where they can hide. It can be hard for an indoor cat to do these kinds of things when living in a small space area."

"With urbanization, higher housing prices, and overcrowding, we see that many indoor cats do not have the opportunity to have their natural needs fulfilled and thus start to act different and can become depressed ... This book could help people get inspired on how to create their own furniture plan and it is wonderful to be able to combine benefit with pleasure. At the same time, as you make room in your home for the right priorities, you also get an interior design dream!"

The ability to keep your cherished fur family happy and contented is indeed a gift. And a beautiful home, on top of melting puppy-dog eyes or a curled-up cat (or, if you prefer, cats) purring on your lap, is a definite bonus to a pet guardian's days. Pets are increasingly taking prominence in many households and the impact of their unconditional love and calming presence—be they rescued or adopted—is a well-known and appreciated privilege. It's hard to compare anything to the fulfillment of a furry tail slumped across your outstretched legs, connected to the contented fur-baby sprawled on the couch next to you.

The projects featured in this book acknowledge the importance of our furry, feathered, scaly, and finned family, and also admits, and without shame too, that nothing is too radical or out of this world when it comes to our darling pets. Because with pets, it is truly the heart that speaks.



FULL HOUSE

Name: Pets Playground

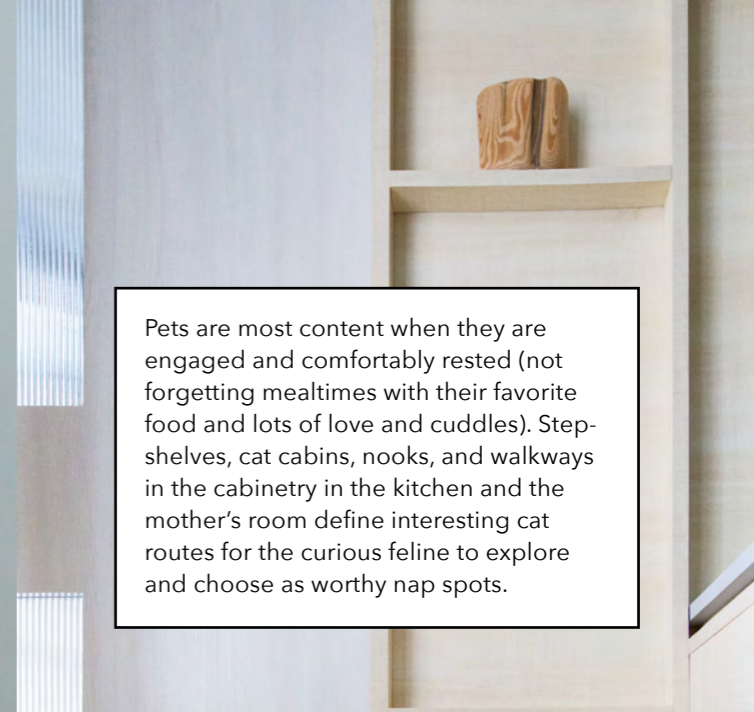
Design: Sim-Plex Design Studio

Photography: Patrick Lam

You know a household is serious about its pet/s when the home interior is specially designed to serve the comfort, pleasure, and safety of their loved non-human family.

This home in Hong Kong, China accommodates a couple, a mother, a cat, and a parakeet, and cleverly crafts its interior to extend to each party their private space, as well as create communal spaces that pets and people can share.





Pets are most content when they are engaged and comfortably rested (not forgetting mealtimes with their favorite food and lots of love and cuddles). Stepshelves, cat cabins, nooks, and walkways in the cabinetry in the kitchen and the mother's room define interesting cat routes for the curious feline to explore and choose as worthy nap spots.





In the mother's room, where the cat usually sleeps, step-shelves in the overhead cabinet lead to a catwalk at the top of the unit to indulge a cat's natural instinct to seek out a high perch. On days when the cuddly darling is feeling less active, a cat house in the wardrobe opposite makes an ideal nook to curl up in, command time to stand still, and simply enjoy being a cat.

The parakeet's den is set in the living room before a large window facing west to catch the sun and natural light. And because we are all familiar with the antics of Sylvester and Tweety, fritted glass doors section off the living room when this feathered cutie is out and about for a flutter to stretch its wings. Other safety considerations in the home include ecological melamine-faced wooden furniture with lower formaldehyde to keep this paws-and-people family healthy and happy.